

SENATE—Wednesday, March 2, 2005

The Senate met at 9:15 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable SAM BROWNBACK, a Senator from the State of Kansas.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.
O God, the Author of peace and lover of concord, we thank You for Your goodness and loving kindness. We praise You for our creation, preservation, and all of the blessings of this life.

Guide and govern the Members of this body by Your Holy Spirit. In the heat of their work help them not to forget You but to remember that Your power is available for every challenge. Teach them how to serve You as they should. Help them not to strive primarily for success but for faithfulness.

Strengthen each of us for the challenges of today and tomorrow. Enable us to so live that people will see Your image and glorify Your name. Bless our military as it labors for liberty. We pray in Your powerful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable SAM BROWNBACK led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 2, 2005.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable SAM BROWNBACK, a Senator from the State of Kansas, to perform the duties of the Chair.

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Mr. BROWNBACK thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, this morning following morning business we will resume consideration of bankruptcy reform. Under an order from last night, shortly after resuming the bill we will proceed to two stacked rollcall votes on amendments. The first vote will be on the Feingold homestead amendment, which will be followed by a vote on the Akaka disclosure amendment. The first vote will, therefore, occur approximately at 10:30 this morning, maybe just a little bit later.

For the remainder of the day we will continue working through amendments to the bill. Senators should expect rollcall votes throughout the day. One of the reasons we scheduled the votes early is to get started to build momentum throughout the course of the day. We made great progress on the bill yesterday. I thank all of our colleagues for coming forward with their amendments.

We are systematically addressing each of the amendments, and we will continue to do so over the course of the day and the remainder of this week.

ACCESS TO SAFE WATER AND SANITATION

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I rise today to speak to legislation that will be introduced by myself and others later today that focuses on an issue which has for too long been neglected, not just by our people or our Government but, indeed, peoples around the world. It centers on the issue of access to safe water and sanitation. This legislation focuses on developing countries with specific policies outlined in the legislation. I am pleased we have Members on both sides of the aisle joining me as original cosponsors of this legislation which will be introduced later today.

It boils down to the simple fact that every 15 seconds, a child dies because of a disease contracted from unclean water. Four children have died since I began talking on this particular issue.

Fully 90 percent of infant deaths, of deaths of children less than 5 years of age, relate to waterborne illnesses, a product of lack of access to clean water or inadequate sanitation. In total, water-related illnesses kill 14,000 people a day, and most of them are children. That is over 5 million people a year. It does not include the other millions of individuals who will be debilitated and prevented from living healthy lives.

Globally, in many ways, waterborne disease is a silent tsunami. That is the

impact it has on a continuing basis. Now is the time to focus on it. Now is the time to act because these are preventable deaths. Typhoid, cholera, dysentery, dengue fever, trachoma, intestinal helminth infection, and schistosomiasis can all be prevented by simply providing safe water and sanitation. More than 1.1 billion people today lack access to clean water. They do not have access to what we take for granted. We can go to the water faucets and drink water in most parts of this country, but lack of access to that clean water is killing a child every 15 seconds. Malaria, which is a mosquito-borne disease directly linked with stagnant pools of water, kills 1 million people each year. Again, most of those are young children. It is preventable.

Unfortunately, reliable projections suggest that the problem is bad, but projections are that it is getting worse. We know it is getting worse. Water stress and water scarcity, leading to disease-borne and impure water, is increasing. If we look forward to 2025, upwards of two-thirds of the world's population may be subject to water stress.

There are over 260 river basins across the world that are shared by two or more countries that actually share the water basins. There are 13 basins that flow through 5 or more countries. There, water is scarce where it is shared by so many. Yet it is so necessary that scarcity can, historically, result in armed conflict. Clean water seems so simple. It seems so basic. In America, we, for the most part, take it for granted. The rest of the world cannot.

UNICEF reports that over half of the world's schools lack safe water and sanitation. In many parts of the world, including in Africa where I have the opportunity to visit, people travel not just an hour but 3 and 4 hours to provide water on a daily basis for their family. In many ways, it becomes a women's issue globally because in most countries that burden falls upon women who are pulled away from addressing other issues such as their children and family. It takes time going to that water source and carrying it home.

Imagine living in a rural village in Sub-Saharan Africa or East Asia where village members share their water with livestock, where you have contamination occurring on an ongoing basis. Imagine being a grandmother like Mihiret G-Maryam from a small village in Ethiopia who watched five of her grandchildren between the ages of 3 and 8 die from water-related diseases. Before the U.K.-based WaterAid organization intervened in her community,

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.